

# MENTAL HEALTH

## The Issue

*Mental health is vital to the productive and happy life of every individual. The availability of needed mental health services, particularly those in the public mental health system, are critical for treatment of mental disorders among affected Maryland residents.*

Mental Health is a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity. Mental Illness is the term that refers collectively to all diagnosable mental disorders. These health conditions are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior, which can be associated with distress and impaired functioning.

Mental disorders can occur across the lifespan, affecting all racial and ethnic groups, both sexes, and all educational and socioeconomic groups. According the National Institutes of Mental Health, approximately 40 million Americans, aged 18 to 64 years, or 22 percent of the population, had a diagnosis of mental disorder alone (19%), or of a co-occurring mental and addictive disorder (3%) in the past year (1999).

***Mental disorders generate an enormous public health burden. Four of the ten leading causes of disability for persons, ages 5 and older, are mental disorders. In developed nations, including the United States, major depression is the leading cause of disability.***

World Health Organization and the World Bank,  
"Global Burden of Disease," 1996

Mental disorders are real health conditions that have an immense impact on individuals and families. Treatment and mental health services are critical to Maryland's health. Currently, approximately 75,000 individuals, whose psychiatric conditions meet criteria for medically necessary services, receive intervention, treatment, and support services through the Public Mental Health System (PMHS) in Maryland.

## Topics, by jurisdiction, included in the Health Improvement Plan

**Statewide** - *Development of a Statewide Comprehensive Crisis Services System; Improving the Public Mental Health System, and; Treating Recognized Depression*

**Worcester County** - *Access to Quality Mental Health Services in Worcester County*

## Priority focus in other jurisdictions

*Mental health* is included as a priority area for FY2000 in:

Allegany County • Carroll County • Charles County • Frederick County  
Harford County • Prince George's County • Talbot County  
Washington County • Worcester County

## Highlights of HIP strategies recommended to improve mental health

*(for in-depth details, see the complete text of each state and county module)*

- Develop a Statewide Comprehensive Crisis Services System, with private and public resources, to promote and improve mental health status. **(State)**
- Increase the proportion of consumers of Public Mental Health Services who indicate they are satisfied with the choice of providers and services they receive. **(State)**
- Increase the proportion of children and young adults with co-occurring substance abuse and mental disorders who receive treatment for both disorders. **(Worcester County)**
- Increase the proportion of juvenile justice facilities that screen new admissions for mental health problems. **(Worcester County)**

## Statewide Partners

Maryland Health Partners • Maryland Local Advocacy Organizations • Maryland Local Core Service Agencies • Maryland Local Health Departments • Maryland Local Hospitals and Mental Health Providers • Maryland Local Police and Public Safety • Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration, DHMH